

mercy! wondrous grace, which can thus change death into life, and make the assurance of being the very chief of sinners, the foundation of endless, inexhaustible bliss, of which the rule is, that the deeper the conviction of guilt, the greater the experience and knowledge of the glory and happiness of deliverance! Such was the experience of Paul; such is the experience of every redeemed sinner, now, and in glory everlasting.

ARTICLE II.

THE RELATION OF STYLE TO THOUGHT.

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In a previous article¹ we endeavored to specify the general relation of language to thought, and to maintain the truth of that theory which regards human language as springing spontaneously from the nature and wants of man. The connection that exists between language and the thought conveyed by it was conceived to be that which exists between any, and every, living principle, and the sensible form, in which it appears to the senses — a *vital* and *organic* connection. Although it was freely conceded that it would perhaps be impossible, to detect this *vitality* of connection with the particular thought expressed, in the case of every word in the language, it was yet maintained that language as a whole, is characterized by a propriety and fitness for the purpose for which it exists which must have sprung from some deeper and more living ground than custom and the principle of association. It was also thought that the theory is a fruitful one in itself, both for the philologist and the philosopher, and that it furnishes the best clue to that more vital, and consequently less easily explicable, use of language, employed by the poet and the orator.

Indeed, the truth and fruitfulness of the theory in question, are nowhere more apparent than in the department of rhetoric and criticism. This department takes special cognizance of the more living and animated forms of speech — of the glow of the poet, and the fire of the orator. It also investigates all those peculiarities of construction and form in human composition that spring out of individual

¹ Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. V. No. XX.

characteristics. It is, therefore, natural to suppose that a theory of language, which recognizes a power in human thought to organize and vivify and modify the forms in which it appears, will afford the best light in which to examine those forms; just as it is natural to suppose that the commonly received theory of physical life, will furnish a better light in which to examine vegetable and animal productions, than a theory like that of Descartes, e. g. which maintains that the forms and functions in the animal kingdom are the result of a mechanical principle. Life itself is the best light in which to contemplate living things.

We propose in the present article to follow the same general method pursued in the preceding, and examine the nature of style, by pointing out its relation to thought.

Style is the particular manner in which thought flows out, in the case of the individual mind, and upon a particular subject. When, therefore, it has, as it always should have, a free and spontaneous origin, it partakes of the peculiarity, both of the individual and of the topic upon which he thinks. A genuine style, therefore, is the free and pure expression of the individuality of the thinker and the speciality of the subject of thought. Uniformity of style is consequently found in the productions of the same general cast of mind, applied to the same general class of subjects, so that there is no distinguishable period in the history of a nation's literature, but what exhibits a style of its own. The spirit of the age appears in the general style of its literary composition, and the spirit of the individual — the tone of his mind — nowhere comes out more clearly than in his manner of handling a subject. The grave, lofty and calm style of the Elizabethan age is an exact representation of the spirit of its thinking men. The intellectual temperament of the age of Queen Anne flows out in the clear, but diffuse and nerveless style of the essayists.

From this it is easy to see that style, like language, has a spontaneous and natural origin, and a living connection with thought. It is not a manner of composing, arbitrarily or even designedly chosen, but rises of its own accord, and in its own way, in the general process of mental development. The more unconscious its origin, and the more strongly it partakes of the individuality of the mind, the more genuine is style. Only let it be carefully observed in this connection, that a *pure* and *sincere* expression of the individual peculiarity is intended. Affectation of originality and studied effort after peculiarity produce *mannerism*, in distinction from that manner of pure nature, which alone merits the name of style.

If this be true, it is evident that the union of all styles, or of a portion of them, would not constitute a perfect style. On the contrary, the excellence of style consists in its having a bold and determined character of its own — in its bearing the genuine image and superscription of an individual mind at work upon a particular subject. In a union of many different styles, there would be nothing simple, bold, and individual. The union would be a mixture, rather than a union, in which each ingredient would be neutralized by all, and all by each, leaving a residuum characterless, spiritless, and lifeless.

Style, in proportion as it is genuine and excellent, is sincere and artless. It is the free and unconscious emanation of the individual nature. It alters as the individual alters. In early life it is ardent and adorned; in mature life it is calm and grave. In youth it is flushed with fancy and feeling; in manhood it is sobered by reason and reflection. But in both periods it is the genuine expression of the man. The gay manner of *L'Allegro* and *Comus* is as truly natural and spontaneous, as the grave and stately style of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. The individuality of a man like Milton passes through great varieties of culture and of mood, and there is seen a corresponding variety in the ways in which it communicates itself; yet through this variety there runs the unity of nature; each sort of style is the sincere and pure manner of the same individual taken in a particular stage of his development.

No one style, therefore, can be said to be the best of all absolutely, but only relatively. That is the best style relatively to the individual, in which his particular cast of thought best utters itself, and in which the peculiarity of the individual has the fullest and freest play. That may be called a good style generally, in which every word *tells* — in which the language is full of thought, and alive with thought, and so fresh and vigorous as to seem to have been just created — while at the same time the characteristics of the mind that is pouring out in this particular manner, are all in every part, as the constructing and vivifying principle.

The truth of this view of style is both confirmed and illustrated by considering the unity in variety exhibited by the human mind itself. The mind of man is one and the same in its constitution and necessary laws, so that the human race may be said to be possessed of one universal intelligence. In the language of one of the most elegant and philosophic of English critics,¹ “It is no unpleasing speculation

¹ Harris. Preface to *Hermes*.

to see how the *same reason*, has at all times prevailed : how there is *one truth*, like one sun, that has enlightened human intelligence through every age, and saved it from the darkness of sophistry and error." Upon this sameness of intelligence rest all absolute statements, and all universal appeals. Over against this universal human mind, as its corresponding object and counterpart, stands truth universal in its nature and one and the same in its essence.

But besides this unity of the universal, there is the variety of the individual, mind. Truth, consequently, coming into consciousness in the form of thought in an individual mind, undergoes modifications. It is now contemplated not as universal and abstract, but as concrete and in its practical relations. It is, moreover, seen, not as an unity, but in its parts, and one side at a time. Philosophical truth in Plato differs from philosophical truth in Aristotle, by a very marked modification. Poetical truth is one thing in Homer and another in Virgil. Religious truth assumes a strikingly different form in Paul and Luther, from that which it wears in John and Melancthon. And yet poetry, philosophy, and religion, have each their universal principles — their one abstract nature. Each, however, *appears* in the form imposed upon it by the individual mind ; each wears that tinge of the mind through which it has passed, which is denominated style.

No man has yet appeared whose individuality was so comprehensive and universal, and who was such a master of form, that he exhausted the whole material of poetry, or philosophy, or religion, and exhibited it in a style and form absolutely universal and final. Enough is ever left of truth, even after the most comprehensive presentation, for another individuality to show it in still a new and original form. For there is no limit to the manner of contemplating infinite and universal truth. Provided only there be a peculiarity — a particular type of the human mind — there will be a peculiarity of intuition, and consequently of exhibition.

The most comprehensive and universal individual mind was that of Shakspeare, and hence his productions have less of style, of peculiar manner, than all other literary productions. Who can describe the style of Shakspeare? Who is aware of his style? The style of Milton is apparent in every line, for he was one of the most *suigeneric* of men. But the form which truth takes in Shakspeare, is as comprehensive and universal as the drama, as all mankind. This is owing to that Protean power by which, for the purposes of dramatic art, he converts himself into other men, takes their consciousness, and thereby temporarily loses his own limited individuality.

But that Shakspeare was an individual — that a peculiar type of humanity formed the basis of his personal being, and that he had a style of thought of his own, it would be absurd to doubt. And had he attempted other species of composition than the drama, (which by its very nature requires that the individuality of the author be sunk and lost entirely in the various characters,) had he taken like Milton a particular theme as the “great argument” for his poetic power, doubtless the *man*, the *individual*, would have come into sight.¹

Style of expression thus springing out of the style of thought, is therefore immediately connected with the structure and character of the individual mind. It consequently has an unconscious origin. On the basis laid in the individual's characteristics, and by and through the individual's mental growth, his manner of expression is formed. There is a certain style which fits the individual — which, and no other, is his style. It is that manner of presenting thought, into which he naturally falls, when his mind is deeply absorbed in a subject, and when he gives no heed to the form into which his thought is running.

It is not to be inferred from this, that style has no connection with culture. It has a most immediate and vital connection with the individual's education. Not only all that he is by nature, but all that he becomes by culture, tends to form his style of thought and expression; but, be it observed, *unconsciously* to him. For an incessant aim, a conscious, anxious effort to form a given style, is the destruction of style. Under such an inspection and oversight, Nature cannot work, even if the mind, under such circumstances, could absorb itself in the theme of reflection. There must be no consciousness during the time and process of composing, but of the subject. The subject being all in all, for the thinker, the form into which his thought runs, with all the modification and coloring which it really, though *unconsciously* to him, receives from his individualism, and from the whole past of his education, is his *style* — his genuine and true manner.

The point to be observed here is, that style is the *consequent*, so far as it is related to culture. For, the culture itself takes its direction and character from the original tendency of the individual, (for every one in the end obtains a mental development coincident with his

¹ In corroboration of this, it may be remarked that we have far more sense of the *individuality* of Shakspeare, while perusing his poems and sonnets, than while studying his dramas.

mental bias,) and style is but the unconscious manifestation of this culture. Style—genuine style—can never be the conscious antecedent of culture. It cannot be first selected, and then the whole individuality of the mind, and the whole course of education, be forced to contribute to its realization. One cannot antecedently choose the style of Burke, e. g. as that which he would have for his own, and then deliberately realize his choice. It is true that a mind similar to that of Burke in its structure, and in sympathy with him through a similarly fruitful and opulent culture, would spontaneously form its style upon, and with, his. But the process, in this case, would not be a deliberate and conscious imitation, but an unconscious and genial reproduction. It would be the consequent of nature and of culture, and not the antecedent. The individual would not distinctly know that his was the style of Burke, until it became apparent to others that it actually was.

Here, too, as in every sphere in which the *living* soul of man works, do we find the genuine and beautiful product, originating freely, spontaneously, and unconsciously. Freely, for it might have been a false and deformed product, yet spontaneously and unconsciously—for it cannot be the subject of reflection and matter of distinct knowledge, until *after* it has come into existence. By the thronging stress and tendency of the human soul, which is so created as to contain within itself the principle and direction of its own movement, is the product originated, which then, and not till then, is the possible and legitimate subject of consciousness, analysis, and criticism. The style of a thinking mind is no exception to this universal law. It is formed, when formed according to nature—when formed as it was destined to be, by that creative idea which prescribes the whole never-ending development of the creature—it is formed out of what is laid in the individual constitution, and through what is brought in by the individual culture, unconsciously to the subject of the process, and yet freely, so far as his nature and constitution were concerned.

If the view that has been taken of style, be correct, it is evident, that in the formation of style, no attempt should be made to change the fundamental character imposed upon it by the individual constitution. The type is fixed by nature, and no one should strive, by forcing nature, to obtain a manner essentially alien and foreign to him. The sort of style which belongs to the individual, by his intellectual constitution is to be taken as given. The direction which all culture in this relation takes, should proceed from this as a point of

departure, and all discipline and effort should end in an acquisition that is homogeneous with this *substantial ground* of style. Or still more accurately, the individuality itself is to be deepened and made more capacious and distinct, by culture, and is then to be poured forth in that *heartly, unconscious* purity of manner which is its proper and genuine style.

And this leads us to consider the true method of forming and cultivating style.

If the general view that has been presented of the nature, both of language and style, be correct, it is plain that the mind itself, rather than the style itself, should receive the formation and the cultivation. Both language and style are but *forms* in which the human mind embodies its thought, and therefore the mind, considered as the originating power — as that which is to find an utterance and expression — should be the chief object of culture, even in relation to style. A cultivated mind contains within itself resources sufficient for all its purposes. The direct cultivation of the mind, is the indirect cultivation of all that stands connected with it.

And this is eminently true of the formal, in distinction from the material departments of knowledge — of those “organic (or instrumental) acts,” as Milton calls them, “which enable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted style of lofty, mean or lowly.” For inasmuch as these formal departments of knowledge are not self-sufficient but derive their substance from the material departments, it is plain that they can be cultivated with power and success only through the cultivation of these latter. Rhetoric, in order to be anything more than an idle play with words and figures of speech — in order to a substantial existence, and an energetic power, must spring out of logic; and logic again, in order to be something more than a dry and useless permutation of the members of syllogisms, must be grounded in the necessary laws of thought, and so become but the inevitable and living movement of reason. Thus are we led in from the external to the internal as the solid ground of action and origination, and are made to see that culture must begin here, in every instance, and work out. All these arts and sciences are the architecture of the rational and thinking mind of man, and all changes in them, either in the way of growth or decline, proceed from a change that has first taken place in their originating ground. They are in reality the index of the human mind and show with most delicate sensibility all that is passing, in this ever-moving principle. What are the languages, literatures, laws, governments, and (with

one exception) religions of the globe, but the history of the human mind — the outstanding monument of what it has *thought!*

It may be said with perfect truth, therefore, that the formation and cultivation of the mind, is the true method of forming and cultivating style. And there are two qualities in mental culture which exert such a direct and powerful influence upon style as to merit in this connection a particular and close examination. They are depth and clearness.

(1) By depth of culture is meant that development of the mind *from its centre*, which enables it to exert its very best power and to accomplish the utmost of which it is capable. The individual mind differs in respect to innate capacity. Some men are created with a richer and more powerful intellectual constitution than others. But all are capable of a *profound* culture; of a development that shall bring out the entire contents and capacity, be they more or less. By going to the centre of the mind — by setting into play those profounder faculties which though differing in degree, are yet the same in kind, in every man, a culture is attained that exerts a most powerful and excellent influence upon style. Such mental education gives *body* to style. It furnishes the material which is to *fill* the language and *solidify* the discourse. The form in which a profoundly cultivated mind expresses itself is never hollow; the language which it employs not being alone — mere words — is never dead. It may, perhaps, be silent at times, for such a mind is not necessarily fluent, but when it *does* speak, the product has a marked character. The thought and its expression form an identity; are coined at one stroke.

For a deeply educated mind spontaneously seeks to know truth in its reality and to express it in its simplicity. Unconsciously, because it is its nature to do so, it penetrates to the heart of a subject, and discourses upon it with a simplicity and directness which precludes any separation between the thought and the words in which it is conveyed. The mind which has but a superficial knowledge of the subject-matter of its discourse cannot render the language it employs *consubstantial* with its thought. We feel that the words have been *hunted up* by a vacant mind, instead of *prompted* by a full one. Thought and language stand apart, because thought has not reached that degree of profundity, and that point of clear intuition, and that height of energy, in consciousness, at which it utters itself in language that is truly one with itself, and alive with itself. Whenever a profoundly cultivated mind directs itself to an object of contemplation it becomes identical with it, while in the act of contemplation. The

distinction between the contemplating subject, and the contemplated object, vanishes for the time being; the mind, as we say popularly, and yet with strict philosophic truth, is *lost* in the theme, and the theme during this temporary process, becomes but a particular state of the mind. The object of contemplation, which at first was *before* the mind is now *in* the mind; that to which the mind came up as to a thing objective and extant, has now been transmuted into the very consciousness of the mind itself, and is therefore the mind itself, *taken and held in this temporary process*.¹ It follows, consequently, that the *style* in which this fusion of truth with intellect flows out, must be as near the perfection of form as it can be. The style of such a mind is similar to the style of the Infinite mind, as it is seen in nature. It is characterized by the simplicity and freedom of nature itself. Nor let this be regarded either as irreverent or extravagant. We are confessedly within the sphere of the finite and the created, and therefore are at an infinite remove from Him "who is wonderful in working," and yet there is something strongly resembling the workings of creative power, in the operations of a mind deeply absorbed in truth and full of the idea. As the Divine idea becomes a phenomenon — manifests itself in external nature — by its own movement and guidance, it necessarily assumes the very perfection of manner. The great attributes of nature, the sublimity and beauty of creation, arise from the oneness of the form with the idea — of the transfusion of mind into matter. In like manner, though in an infinitely lower sphere and degree, the human idea, profound, full, and clear in consciousness, throws itself out into language, in a style, free, simple, beautiful, and it may be, sublime like nature itself. And all this arises because thought does its own perfect work — because truth arrived at in the consciousness of the profound thinker is simply suffered to exercise its own vitality and to organize itself into existence.

¹ The doctrine of the identity of subject and object in the act of consciousness is a true and safe one, it seems to us, only when stated with the limitation above; only when the identity is regarded as merely *relative* — as existing only *in, and during the act of consciousness*. If, however, the identity is regarded as *absolute and essential* — if apart from consciousness and back of consciousness the subject and object — the mind and the truth — are absolutely but one essence, then we see no difference between the doctrine and that of the "*substantia una et unica*" of Spinoza. The identity in this case, notwithstanding the disclaimer of Schelling, is *sameness* of substance, and there is but one substance in the universe. The truth is, that subject and object are not absolutely, one essence, but two; but become one temporarily, in the act of consciousness, by virtue of a *homogeneity*, rather than an absolute identity of essence.

It is not so much because the individual makes an effort to embody the results of his meditation, as because these results have their own way, and take their own form, that the style of their appearance is so grand. It has been asserted above, that style, in its most abstract definition, is the universal, appearing in the particular. In other words, it is the particular and peculiar manner, in which the individual mind conceives and expresses truth, which is universal. Now it is only by and through *depth* of mental cultivation, that truth, in its absolute reality and in its vital energy, is reached at all. A superficial education never reaches the heart of a subject—never brings the mind into contact and fusion with the real substance of the topic of discourse. Of course, a mind thus superficially educated, in reality has nothing to express. It has not reached that depth of apprehension, that central point, where the solid and real truth lies, at which, and only at which, it is qualified to discourse. It may, it is true, speak *about* the given topic, but before it can speak it *out*, in a grand, impressive style, and in discourse which, while it is weighty and solid, also dilates and thrills and glows with the living verity, it *must*, by deep thought, have effected that *mental union* with it, of which we have spoken.

A mind, on the contrary, that has received a central development, and whose power of contemplation is strong, instead of working at the surface, and about the accidents, strikes down into the heart and essence, and obtains an actual view of truth; and under the impulse imparted by it, and by the light radiated from it at all points, simply represents it. In all this there is no effort at expression—no endeavor at style—on the part of the individual. He is but the medium of communication, now that by his own voluntary thought, the union between his mind and truth, has been brought about. All that he needs to do is, to absorb himself still more profoundly in the great theme, and to let it use him as its organ. It will flow through his individualism, and take form and hue from it, as inevitably as the formless and colorless light, acquires both form and color, by coming into the beautiful arch of the sky.

(2) By clearness, as an element in culture, is meant such an education of the mind, as arms it with a penetrating and clear vision, so that it beholds objects in distinct outline. When united with depth of culture, this element is of great worth, and diffuses through the productions of the mind, some of the most desirable qualities. Depth, without clearness of intuition, is obscurity. Though there may be substantial thinking, and real truth may be reached by the

mind, yet, like the *ύλη*, out of which the material universe was formed, according to the ancient philosophy, it needs to be irradiated by light, before it becomes a defined, distinct, and beautiful form. Indeed, without clearness of intuition, truth must remain in the depths of the mind, and cannot be really expressed. The mind, without close and clear thinking, is but a dark chaos of ideas, intimations, and feelings. It is true, that in these is the substance of truth, for the human mind is, by its constitution, full of truth; yet these its contents need to be *elaborated*. These undefined ideas need to become clear conceptions; these dark and pregnant intimations need to be converted into substantial verities; and these swelling but vague feelings must acquire definition and shape, not merely that the consciousness of one mind may be conveyed over into that of another, but also in order to the mind's full understanding of itself.

And such culture manifests itself in the purity and perspicuity of the style in which it conveys its thoughts. Having a distinctly clear apprehension of truth, the mind utters its conceptions with all that simplicity and pertinence of language which characterizes the narrative of an honest eye-witness. Nothing intervenes between thought and expression. The clear, direct view, *instantaneously* becomes the clear, direct statement. And when the clear conception is thus united with the profound intuition, thought assumes its most perfect form. The form in which it appears, is full and round with solid truth, and yet distinct and transparent. The immaterial principle is embodied in just the right amount of matter; the former does not overflow, nor does the latter overlay. The discourse exhibits the same opposite and counterbalancing excellencies, which we see in the forms of nature — the simplicity and the richness, the negligence and the niceness, the solid opacity and the aerial transparency.¹

¹ Shakspeare affords innumerable exemplifications of the characteristic here spoken of. In the following passages notice the *purity* and *cleanness* of the style in which he exhibits his thought. As in a perfect embodiment in nature, there is nothing ragged, or to be sloughed off:

* * * Chaste as the icicle
That's curd'd by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple.

Coriolanus, V. 3.

* * * * * This hand
As soft as dove's down, and as white as it;
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow,
That's bolted by the northern blasts twice o'er.

Winter's Tale, IV. 3.

It is rare to find such a union of the two main elements of culture, and consequently rare to find them in style. A profoundly contemplative mind is often mystic and vague in its discourse, because it has not come to a clear, as well as profound consciousness — because distinctness has not gone along with depth of apprehension. The discourse of such a mind is thoughtful and suggestive it may be, but is lacking in that scientific, logical power which penetrates and illumines. It has warmth and glow, it may be, but it is the warmth of the stove (to use the comparison of another) — warmth without light.

On the other hand it often happens that the culture of the mind is clear but shallow. In this case nothing but the merest and most obvious commonplace is uttered, in a manner intelligible and plain enough to be sure, but without force or weight, or even genuine fire, of style. Shallow waters show a very clear bottom, and but little intensity of light is needed in order to display the pebbles and clean sand. That must be a “purest ray serene” — a pencil of strongest light — which discloses the black, rich, wreck-strown depths. For the clearness of depth is very different from the clearness of shallowness. The former is a positive quality. It is the positive and powerful irradiation of that which is solid and dark, by that which is ethereal and light. The latter is a negative quality. It is the mere absence of darkness, because there is no substance to be dark — no body in which (if we may be allowed the expression) darkness can inhere. Nothing is more luminous than solid fire; nothing is more flashy than an ignited void.

These two fundamental characteristics of mental culture, lie at the foundation of style. Even if the secondary qualities of style could exist, without the weightiness and clearness of manner which spring from the union of profound with distinct apprehension, they would exist in vain. The ornament is worthless, if there is nothing to sustain it. The bas-relief is worthless without the slab to support it.

Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
Had baked thy blood, and made it heavy, thick;
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins.

King John, III. 2.

And I, of ladies most defect and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune, and harsh.

Hamlet, III. 1.

Best, these secondary qualities of style—the beauty, and the elegance, and the harmony—derive all their charm and power from springing out of the primary qualities, and in this way ultimately, out of the deep and clear culture of the mind itself—from being the white flower of the black root.

Style, when having this mental and natural origin, is to be put into the first class of fine forms. It is the form of thought; and, as a piece of art, is as worthy of study and admiration, as those glorious material forms which embody the ideas of Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Raphael. It is the form in which the human mind manifests its freest, purest, and most mysterious activity—its thought. There is nothing mechanical in its origin, or stale in its nature. It is plastic and fresh as the immortal energy, of which it is the air and bearing.

ARTICLE III.

THE FOUR GOSPELS AS WE NOW HAVE THEM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND THE HEGELIAN ASSAULTS UPON THEM.

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In this essay I propose to discuss the following topics:

- I. The value of the four gospels as we now have them in the New Testament.
- II. Religious character of the Hegelian philosophy.
- III. Analysis and characteristics of the principal Hegelian assaults on the gospels.
- IV. The real importance to be attributed to these assaults.
- V. Comparison of the canonical gospels with the apocryphal gospels still extant.
- VI. Comparison of the canonical gospels with the fragments of gospels supposed to be lost.
- VII. What may be actually known as to the genuineness and incorruptness of the gospels as we now have them in the New Testament.
- VIII. General results of the whole discussion.

For the benefit of the reader who may wish to pursue the investigation, I will also select, from the very copious literature of the subject, a few of the best and most instructive works on both sides.